From:	Amanda Armstrong
To:	Grp. City Council and City Web Site
Subject:	FY 2021 Budget
Date:	Thursday, July 30, 2020 1:36:55 PM

Hello City Council Members,

My name is Amanda Armstrong and I live in Ward 1.

I am writing to express my opposition to the excessive budgetary allotment to Missoula's police department for FY 2021. I believe that investment in our community in the form of affordable housing initiatives and mental health services will better serve our community. Mayor Engen has stated that Missoula Police officers deserve a place to change, shower and store their belongings. Is this not true for community members? The proposed locker-room project is unnecessary, and frankly, offensive. Why should Missoula taxpayers invest such a large sum of money in a police department when we have so many struggling with the high cost of housing relative to wages in Missoula? This money would be far better spent investing in public housing.

Additionally, mental health services are severely lacking in MIssoula, and it is of dire consequence that we remedy this situation by allocation funds for mental health services. Missoula police officers are not equipped to be dealing with mental health issues. My experiences with Missoula's police officers lead me to believe that their aggressive and authoritarian tactics do not make community members dealing with mental health issues safer- in fact I believe they do the opposite.

The last time I called the police will be the **last** time I call the police, because I do not trust them to be of help. My neighbor was being assaulted by her boyfriend, and I called 911 because I feared for her life. By the time responding officers arrived, my other neighbor and I had managed to get him to leave. Responding officers questioned the victim, and she lied to protect her abuser, as is common in domestic violence situations. The female officer was extremely aggressive toward the victim, asking why she was lying and threatening to arrest the victim because she "had to arrest **someone**." I pulled the officer aside and implored her to treat the victim with more compassion, and was told that "the brat is obstructing justice." I also spoke privately with the officer's partner, asking him to intervene. He just shrugged. In the end, they took the victim to jail, further traumatizing her. Nothing was done to follow up, and her abuser returned later in the week and beat her up again. It took two more instances of abuse before he was finally arrested. My neighbor is lucky she survived.

Please revise the budget to invest in public housing and mental health support. $19 million dollars would be much better spent investing in our community in ways that decriminalize poverty and mental health issues.

Regards,
Amanda

--
Amanda Armstrong
C: 406.860.0771